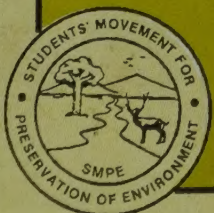


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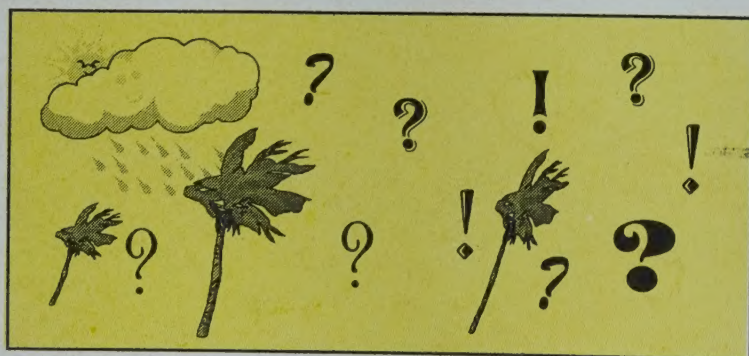
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EDITORIAL

What shall I write about today?

*Shall I simply write about today, because
of tomorrow - one can never really say?*

*Today, the air has told its tale, making the left-over trees its stringed instrument.
Of tomorrow, one can never really say.*

*Today, little sunbirds have sipped from vibrant creepers, as crows and kites congregated at strategic
eat-out points overflowing like self-service restaurants, telling us of the abundance of 'finger-
licking' delicacies.
Of tomorrow, one can never really say.*

*Today, yuppity Indian children ran to schools and factories and beggaries and prison cells and
remand homes.
Of tomorrow, one can never really say.*

*Today, our lakes, where skippers leap and dab-chicks peep, didn't hold water to classy architects
and 'ray-banned' developers.
Of tomorrow one can never really say.*

*Today, treaties are signed and movies banned, patents are in and bio-diversity is a sin.
Of tomorrow, one can never really say.*

*Today, we remembered our leaders as holidays and surrendered them to economic invaders marching
down hi-tech ramps. Today, Information Technology was 'IT', yet we lived by barefoot farmers
ploughing their dreams with wet earth and monsoon clouds.
Of tomorrow, one can never really say.*

*Today, our earth willingly carried round the sun - us - the mindless destroyer, the species executer,
the pivotal of creation.
Of tomorrow, one can never really say.*

A CYCLONE THAT RAISED QUESTIONS

The water level rose to twelve feet. They had to desert their homes carrying their children high, leaving behind their belongings. People crouched on temple roofs for more than three days without food or water. A woman delivered her baby in these circumstances atop a house, as floods swept into the village. These are the few stories that were told. These are the few stories we read-in their eyes.

This was cyclone-hit Ongole in Andhra Pradesh. It was the nation's new-found natural disaster. For the newspapers, it was the next day's headline. For the TV channels, it was challenging filming for nationwide telecast. For the State's Ministers, it was an occasion of misfortune, since they were forced to visit their constituencies. For the layman in different regions of the Country, it was just another calamity. For the people of Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, it was their very lives. The SMPE found on arrival, that the cyclone and its damages had changed the lives of the people along Andhra's coastal belt. The disaster was not new to them, but they had to once again start restoring, rebuilding, replacing all that they had lost - families, livestock, crops. Among those coming forward to repair their

enormous losses was the Government, which sanctioned compensations for the death of kith 'n' kin; local NGOs stayed on to help in the concrete rehabilitation work - construction of shelters, channelizing the inflow of funds from external NGOs, distribution of clothes, etc. The four local organisations involved in these activities were RAYS, CHOICE, PASCA and SHRADHA. While people from these bodies worked on the spot, amidst pain and discomfort, there were others raising funds via. cricket matches and music nites in urban centres. The World Bank too contributed to the rehabilitation treasury. With such a deluge of funds, Ongole's people should have quickly hopped back to normal living. But the victims continued to live out their daily nightmares. Did the funds really reach the people who were truly affected? How much of the actual damage was being repaired? These were the questions which SMPE and other like-minded organisations raised. SMPE contacted its student force in schools around Bangalore and collected clothes, providing therefore for the fulfilment of one of the basic needs. Other student groups from religious organisations and colleges, like

the United Theological College, came together under the banner of Inter-Sem Action Committee. Loaded with clothes and a workforce, we set off to Andhra on the 2nd of January, 1997. 'Prajwala' of Chittoor put this workforce onto the NGOs working at Ongole. At Ongole, the fields were green and spread out like huge, heavenly mats waiting for someone to rest on them, but evidence of the disaster was ever present in the trees bent at angles of 75° - 85°. Hay and waste material was seen amid branches of trees rising 10 - 15 feet above the fields. We saw that lives had been lost, but the people of Ongole had lost something else. The ability to hope. Organisations came with cameras to photograph the pain of these people. They promised them a lot, but never returned. There were a few who proved genuinely helpful. Some came to see this exhibit of human desolation and tears. Not many enquired into the causes of this disaster. Very few made connections between the corruption of politicians, the developmental disease, the compromising urbanite, the weak-willed student body, the cat-walked prostitution, the vetoed masses and this so-called 'natural disaster'.

To further the devastation of the experience, the Reddys and Naidus claimed access to rescue boats and supplies, denying the lower castes basic necessities. Many lives were lost when the Reddys and Naidus after boarding the rescue boats kicked and pushed shudra villagers and tribals into the flood waters, a day after the cyclone struck. When people begged for shelter from the rising waters on the Reddy's terraces, doors were slammed in their faces in the name of caste.

Despite this oppression of the spirit, when we reached Samyarpalayam, a tiny tribal village of around 35 families, we were treated with courtesy and piping hot coffee. The

people of this village require a special mention, for, inspite of their obvious need for clothing and food, when told that some supplies were to be kept aside for other villages, they neither complained nor did they grumble, but only smilingly took according to their need. We were told how they had taken refuge on a gopuram, along with wild boars, bandicoots, snakes and scorpions - all huddled together, breathing in the air of survival and death.

Entwined in the rafters of a damaged dam were coconut-palms that were burnt by the villagers, because human carcass had been blown into the trees with such force, that separating the dead from the

mesh of corrugated steel and tree was unthinkable. Bodies were cremated quite often in this manner.

While playing a fund-raising Cricket match and swaying to music-nite music, how much oneness with Ongole's agony could the urban cosmopolitans have really felt? 'Disasters' of this proportion being man-made will strike the helpless who battle the elements again and again, while a jean shinned yankee-doodler again and again will indulge in the ecstasy of being able to afford to help the helpless.

LEONARD KUMAR

Secretary

*Students' Movement for
Preservation of Environment*

SORRY, YOU ARE WRONG

1. It is believed that only the lionesses hunt while, His Majesty, the lion, takes his 'lion's share'.
* Sorry, this notion is proved wrong by studies conducted in Northern Botswana by Dereck Beverly and Beverly Joubert that lions actively participate in hunting. They hunt down large animals like the Cape Buffalo, Giraffes and even Elephants.
2. Maintaining a good garden of exotic plants is an indication of a good taste for nature preservation.
* Sorry, a good naturalist appreciates naturally growing vegetation, in all its diversities. Maintaining a 'good' garden of exotic plants shows a poor taste for nature.
3. Chimpanzees are the highest evolved among animals. But humans are far greater qualitatively.
* Sorry, this is another misconception. Research findings of Jane Goodall reveals that the difference in DNA between the Chimpanzees and humans is only one percent. The World of Science was shocked to learn that the humans are greater only in terms of a degree scale and not in kind.
4. Gorillas are ferocious and unpredictable apes, ready to attack intruders.
* Recent studies reveal that gorillas are very shy animals, and the ferocious act put up by them are mostly bluffs - to ward off intruders.
5. The Octopus is a 'Devil Fish' capable of capturing boats and killing humans.
* Sorry, it is neither devilish nor is it a fish. It exclusively feeds on crabs and is not interested in human beings. Researchers studying these basically shy animals, discovered to their surprise, that they are adorably emotional and admirably affectionate.

YELLAPPA REDDY - A MAN OF CHARACTER

We can live without clever people, but not with characterless people. You don't need a coward, but a characterless fellow, to spoil the society. If intelligence overtakes character in man, then what can we say ?

Q. What is the most significant incident in your career?

A. There are several significant encounters I have had in my life as a Forest Officer with the poachers and encroachers. In the 1970's, the awareness about Ecology, Wildlife Conservation and Environmental Protection wasn't very much. I had to individually initiate it to throw out all the poachers and encroachers from Nagarahole National Park. I did not get adequate support from the government or public or naturalist or the environmentalist. So, as a single person, I accepted this challenge and within two years, I was able to weed out these elements successfully and tactfully. Nagarahole National Park today is one of the world's best national parks in its biodiversity and bio-mass-productivity because of that single effort. I had to spend a number of sleepless nights due to threats from poachers and others, including smugglers. Twenty five years back, as a young officer, this challenge made that year very eventful. In spite of a lot of disencouragement from my

superiors, I was able to meet this challenge. This is still green in my mind.

Q. Were there also threats from the official quarters?

A. Politicians also interfered - true. But I was able to tackle them. Besides, Nagarahole was in the C.M.'s constituency and so I had big support from him. I was able to push through mainly because of the political will of the Chief Executive. Though I was blessed by the Chief Executive, it was only an indirect blessing, no written order as such was given. From 1971-1977 (I was Deputy Conservator of Forests) when Mr. Devaraj Urs was C.M., I had support. Later also, none of the government officials interfered with my work. But at the fag end of my service, there was interference. Ecological awareness among the politicians has decreased. In the 90's there are no politicians like Devaraj Urs, with a vision for the future. People lack the commitment to protect our natural resources. I feel sad for these politicians who are unable to appreciate these concerns. Individually, when I speak to them, they worry. But, when it comes to making official

decisions, somehow they favour wrong policies. I must make this clear. It is not only the position they hold that is obstructing them, but a complete lack of commitment towards the welfare of the country. They are interested in immediate gains - of getting votes, satisfying vested interest groups and also a lack of foresight.

Q. Since the government has failed, do you see any hope with the NGO's?

A. Yes, some NGO's are very serious and committed about this issue. Most NGO's don't want to displease the politicians. The majority are only interested in getting some funds or grants from the government. 90% of them are registered to get financial support from the government. Likewise, the government policy is to encourage NGO's and other organisations being financed from abroad. So, the mushrooming of NGO's has begun only with vested interests. They do not have any definite cause like Anna Hazare - he hasn't got any money from anybody. A sincere NGO will not ask for a single pie from anybody, for any of their

activities. Acceptance of finance from the government will mean a sacrifice of their principles. They will then have to please their masters. An NGO must be work-oriented rather than finance-oriented. It should motivate people to be self-reliant and help them to not look for external support. Instead human and natural resources at their command must be managed and necessary technology developed to harness natural resources properly. Automatically the economic standard too will rise. This kind of joint, community working does not require financing. Once locality-wise negative manifestations within the environment both natural and man-made are spotted, they can be locally eliminated. Man-made negativities break down the fabric of society - it may be liquor problem or someone who is financing anti-social elements for his own benefit, someone who is destroying the natural resources for his own benefit - these problems must be boldly and confidently weeded out. What is basically required is an understanding of nature and the factors facilitating the degradation and destruction of natural resources. The moment you attack these problems, nature is bountiful. We must be like shrewd business men - how do they operate? All strings are pulled carefully. So also....

Q. When we talk of environmental organisations, there is a notion that they are elitist and don't cater to the people at large. What do you feel about this notion?

A. I fully agree. Most don't cater to people at large. There are many white-collared environmentalists who attend world conferences. They articulate well, they know the right jargon, they debate issues with catchy phrases and oppose the 5-star culture. So, there are many people who are talking and very few working. We want

forthcoming from many. Anna Hazare has all of Maharashtra after him now, because he doesn't have anything at all. A simple man is able to shake the government - Why? People are searching very carefully for such people. We need NGO's with such character. Besides, NGO's don't have a wholistic approach. Results will be visible only if they tackle most of the issues. Confining themselves to one or two aspects will not help.

Majority of the NGO's are only interested in getting some funds or grants from the government. 90% of them are registered to get financial support from the government.

workers now. Many NGO's have exploited the people by presenting their pathetic conditions elsewhere and getting money for programmes conducted only for the sake of their records. The rural people may not know English, but they can immediately see the motives behind any organisation or individual. They have lost faith in everybody. They will accept us only if we prove our credibility. This has been my experience in Karnataka. Wherever I worked, I have done what I have said I would do for the people. People in India are very good, innocent and sweet-hearted. They want something good from everybody. But it is not

Q. Do you think the younger generation, especially students, can contribute to bringing about a solution and a change?

A. In this country, there are 2 vital components. The youth and the poorest of the poor. The two make up more than 70% of our population. The poor - starving, with no support from any direction. The youth - confused, frustrated. Both need a direction. No political party has given them a path. This abundant energy, knowledge, skill and resource is going waste. A vision to synthesize these two forces is needed. A planner or policy maker must come, who can cement these great forces, so as to build a

structure. We cannot afford to neglect them. Why are the youth taken in by events like the beauty pageant? According to me, it is in no way better than a fancy dress competition held in a school. Such being the case, the government should not have given unnecessary support to its organisers, who in turn took full advantage of its weakness. Suddenly, we have the visual medium, day in and day out keeping on about cosmetics today. This cosmetic culture is being rejected in the West because of health reasons. Most of these cosmetics are synthetic-based and carcinogenic. Having discovered this, they are going in for Natural cosmetics. The producers of synthetic cosmetics have found that India with a population of 1 billion (nearly 20% of 1/5th of the world's population is in India) out of which ½ a billion is female, 30 to 35% of which are living in urban or semi-urban areas. If the semi-urban population adds up to, say, 5 billion - that itself is equal to triple that of America. Therefore, what an average American woman buys can be tripled in the Indian market.

Q. *You said that the West is turning to natural cosmetics, is this also part of the trend seen in the implementation of IPR and the recent stress on bio-diversity?*

The west refuses to use products having animal fat. They are insisting on soaps having vegetable oil base. They are going back to using natural perfumes.

A. You see, now the west refuses to use products having animal fat. They are insisting on soaps having vegetable oil base. Also, they aren't using any synthetic perfumes. They are going back to using natural perfumes. So, now our turmeric and even Untuoula (Soapnut) is being used by them. Even for browning the skin, synthetic tanners are being rejected. Now, extracts from Cassia are used. One by one they are eliminating synthetics. This is why they are imposing their obsolete products on to us, because they know it will sell. They know our countries have no R 'n' D base. But for our people to see this strategy it will take about 10 years. By that time, they would have made enough money. But awareness is increasing among schools and colleges. They want a secure future and so are trying to understand. Unlike some others - living for momentary pleasures, the percentage of students wanting to revolutionise the system are gradually influencing their friends. Looking at other's experiences and social pains brings a sort of fear psychosis, which is a threat to the system. It is society which is the biggest teacher and its message travels

fast. When students admit their suffering due to indulgence in any particular activity, its publicity must be used as a weapon. One should always give live examples. Parents and institutions could highlight suffering of this kind.

Q. *Isn't this also happening with pesticides, fertilizers, etc.?*

A. Yes, very much. Huge quantities of pesticides which have been banned, medicines banned in foreign countries are still circulated in India with no indications of side-effects or their environmental impact. Not only are they banned in other countries, but our law too has banned them. But nothing has happened to stop their sales. 70% of banned pesticides continue to be sold openly in the market.

Q. *Why is this possible?*

A. Strange, strange! The nomenclature of the drug or pesticide is changed, their adverse effects are not revealed... This is very good ground for them to sell and market their products, since they can easily manouver our legal system.

Q. *Aren't the farmers who buy and use these products*

being educated?

A. Yes, it is slowly taking place. They are realising that there are environmental catastrophes connected with their use. In A.P., Gulbarga and Maratwada, there has been a great decrease in their usage. In A.P., they have lost entire cotton crops and money, 1000s of farmers have committed suicide having sold everything to save their crop. Similarly, in Maratwada, the groundnut crop has been lost, in Gulbarga, the red-gram crop. Via research and thorough investigation by entomologists, it has been found that the reason was the destruction of certain ecological components in the whole region. Its cost was so huge. So, farmers are being told to use simple techniques which are best. e.g. planting a stick in the ground upon which a drongo perches and locates the pests and devours them or they are told of the role of the cattle egret. When the first plough is made and farmers open the first furrow, grubs emerge. Rows of egrets devour them. Because of the overuse of pesticides, the soil is contaminated and egrets eating poisoned grubs die. The rest have abandoned the area. So pesticide control is necessary. People have seen this

and are now changing.

Q. Even when today's youth want to do something worthwhile, the adults don't give them encouragement. What is the solution for this problem?

A. Many adults lack information about the latest developments in science. They are educated and will understand. But knowing the consequences fully well, if they ignore the issue, then they are not human beings at all! A normal human, with an understanding of his responsibilities as a citizen will realise that he has to discharge his duties. Otherwise that person needs an overall reviewing. This is when we realise that people have no value for education. Education means edification. It means the development of character. We can live without clever people, but not with characterless people. You don't need a coward, but a characterless fellow, to spoil the society. One fellow with character can demotivate fifty characterless people. If intelligence overtakes character in man, then what can we say? When I was a Forest Officer, I have seen that a man eater won't harm its own fellow

creatures and will directly or indirectly do good to the environment. Look at any tree. It may not communicate, but the amount of service it does to all living creatures is enormous. If we do not do any good to our environment, at least let's not harm it. If this is not our approach, then we will not fit in the hierarchy of living creatures. We have to then put people into a separate category.

Q. I have always struggled with this question. Every animal has its own niche, a special place which doesn't interfere with other life forms. But the human organism, an animal with wisdom has occupied the biosphere, the hydrosphere and has destroyed it. What wisdom is this?

A. We are trying to conquer Mother Nature and be masters of it. The result is what is happening today. In A.P., there are floods. Within 50 kms. in Orissa, there is severe drought. Its the same in the East Coast. These are indications that man has not taken care to maintain the balance. There are a lot of rapid changes being seen. If you look at India today, 50% of the area has one problem or the other. Flood or drought. No state is free from the ecological catastrophes. This is mainly because of the scant respect we have shown.

We are trying to conquer Mother Nature and be masters of it. The result is what is happening today. In A.P., there are floods. Within 50 kms. in Orissa, there is severe drought.

Q. Are these disasters natural in that case?

A. It is man-made because we have failed to understand the cosmic relationships of all the components - the water cycle, the carbon cycle and the energy cycle. These cycles are highly organised because the natural law is operating very meticulously. We haven't understood their precision and have forced radical changes on the planet. Now more than 80% of the eco-system is tampered with and these changes create an impact at the macro level. Once when it starts reflecting at the macro level, the repercussions will be very severe.

Q. How do you make industrialists, who are mainly profit motivated understand this? According to some people, since science and technology have created these problems, it is science and technology that can take care of them. Therefore, other industries are created, like environmental engineering, bio-technology, etc.?

A. What happens is you create a problem and then invest double the amount to solve the problem. So knowing this, we must put an end to the creation of the problem itself. Various international delegations on CFC's, Ozone depletion, etc. have signed certain agreements.

They are arriving at certain conclusions. But their implementation and the political will of the people to save their own species is lacking. The ethics to stop the invasion of technology through MNC's or WB or any other unscrupulous medium is lacking. As humans, we should

What happens is you create a problem and then invest double the amount to solve the problem. So knowing this, we must put an end to the creation of the problem itself.

ask whether this planet belongs to everyone or not. Our intentions should not be making money. We need a human heart and not just a human face. Only then history will remember you for the good done. You see, in our mythology, we see two classes of exploiters, rakshasas and devatas. Manifestations of demons are ruling us today. But some divine manifestations will come.

Q. I think the same kind of Rakshasas are hijacking slogans like "We are a global world; we are all people of one world, so let us share our resources", in conferences like "Global Environment Facilities". Doesn't this cancel out the local bio-diversity and doesn't it also imply that nations should give up their own bio-diversity for the sake of the Global cause?

A. See, here we have to understand the basic principle

behind this intention. The 1st World was not at all concerned with their traditional knowledge. On the contrary, they have already done enough damage to their own country. Most of the resource bases in all developed countries have been lost. Now they've come here to exploit our resources,

because they know that our countries can rule the world by resource

wealth alone. Even their climatic conditions are not favourable to them. It is an extremely harsh climate. So when we look at the tropical world, we find that the climate is congenial to productive capacities and bio-diversity is very much.

Q. Don't you feel, that the WB and the UNO are being used by the 1st World as channels to manipulate the 3rd World countries?

A. Yes, they are using them and benefitting. And anybody who opposes them are cowed down by various strategies. They may use many methods, but it will not last long. Their intentions are now known. Equity sharings are covering all the resources in their country. They are not sharing their resources, but exploiting their own communities. 'Globalisation', 'Liberalisation', 'Market Economy' - these slogans are all

vested-interest-jargons. Committed scientists in their countries are exposing this and feel sad that others are unable to understand, inspite of clear warnings.

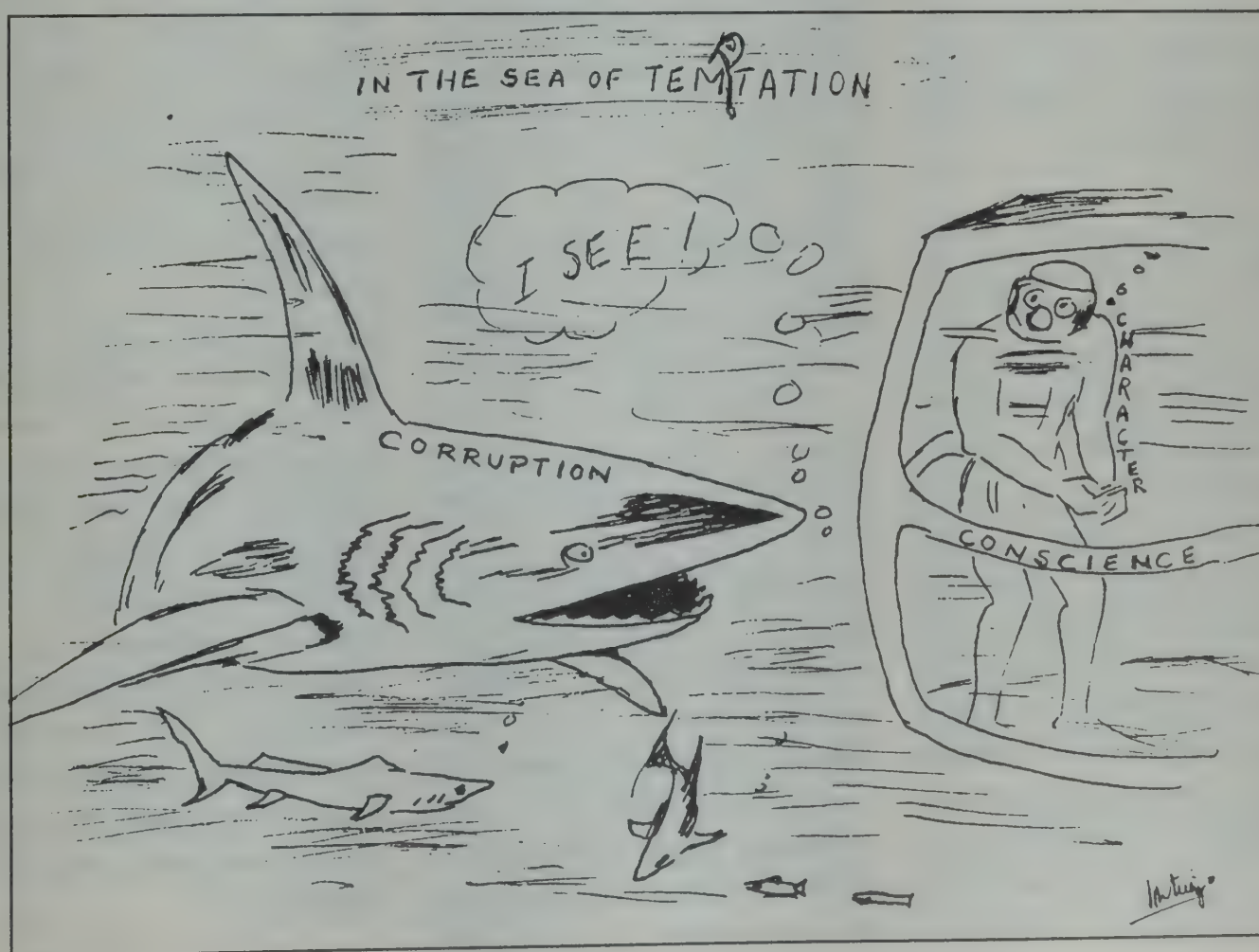
Q. Do we in the 3rd World completely reject industrial development and technological advancement which the 1st World has mastered?

A. I'm not saying that we should boycott it, but we should be careful enough to know what we want and how much we want. We should know where to stand, realising our capabilities, our assets and resource knowledge. We must

safeguard and use them to the extent needed. We must not be totally puritan or form water tight compartments. We must be shrewd partners, so far and no further. They can come in but only to a certain extent, we can't take them to our core area. Yes, they are friends. We can't allow them to be our masters. We must have the freedom to know what we want, what our family wants, retaining our own. Yes, they have come here, they should inform us about what they want, either coffee or tea, but if they want whisky? Sorry! If they say, we want Scotch whisky, we have come all the way for Globalisation,

you must provide it... There's nothing in our culture to offer you this. Instead of this, if we say, we'll surely give you whisky, not only whisky, but anything you want. It won't help us in retaining the sanctity of our culture. Our own hard earned knowledge, God given endowments we should keep intact. We shouldn't throw our purse around and expose all our weaknesses and resources. No shrewd businessman will put all his eggs in one basket and take a risk. So, we need to know how many eggs we should put into which basket.

- SMPE Team



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN INDIA

Resources of the earth may be broadly classified into organic and inorganic (which include wildlife), are renewable and can be harvested and utilized in perpetuity provided removals do not exceed the regeneration potential of the resources. Air, sunshine, soil and water are the principal requirements for the sustenance of organic resources. Hence wildlife conservation cannot be viewed in isolation, but should take into account the total environment.

The Explosive rate of increase in human developmental processes and technologies which are inimical to environment, affluent and wasteful are the main causes for the destruction of habitat and decline of wildlife.

India has 16 percent of the world's human population, but only 2.2 percent of the land area. Adverse land/man ratio exerts intense pressure on land. Another contributory factor for the depletion of wildlife resources in India is the enormous cattle population. Vast majority of the cattle resort to forests and other common lands for grazing and cause damage to vegetation. Constant trampling by cattle compacts soil, reduces infiltration of rain water, leading to desiccation and desertification. Cattle are

also responsible for the transmission of diseases such as rinderpest and foot and mouth diseases to wild animals.

Commercial exploitation is a serious threat to the survival of several species. Poaching elephants for ivory, rhino for horn, musk deer for the musk gland and currently tiger for bones, skin and other parts are some well known examples among wild animals. Plants also are exposed to similar threat. Sandal tree has virtually disappeared from large parts of its original range.

Although species extinction is inevitable in the process of evolution and natural selection, the pace is being accelerated at an alarming rate through the intervention of man. Deforestation is taking place at an estimated rate of 10 million hectares a year, equivalent to 20 hectares a minute and most of it in the tropical regions. Species extinction is estimated between 10 to 20 thousand per year. Some well known examples of animals which became extinct in India in recent times are the Cheetah and the lesser one-horned Rhinoceros among mammals and pink-headed Duck and mountain Quail among birds. Although Jerdon's courser was once presumed to be extinct,

this bird has been recently rediscovered in Andhra Pradesh after several decades. Several species have become rare and highly endangered.

An important landmark in wildlife conservation in India is the establishment of the Indian Board for Wildlife in 1952. With the Prime Minister / Union Minister as the Chairman and the Minister in charge of Forests, Chief Conservators of Forests and other experts on the Board, it plays a crucial role in laying down guidelines regarding policies and programmes for the conservation of wildlife in the country. On the recommendation of the Board, Government of India set up an Expert Committee (Ghorpade Committee) to review the existing situation and to suggest measures for effective conservation and proper management of wildlife. One of the important recommendations of the Committee was to set up national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in different parts in the country which could receive special attention for the protection and management of wildlife. The Committee recommended that atleast 4% of the land area may be set apart as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Since the recommendation of the Expert Committee, the network of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries has been expanded greatly and currently, there are 80 national parks with a total area of 34,689 Sq. Kms. and 441 wildlife sanctuaries covering 1,14,164 Sq. Kms. However, it must be admitted that for a majority of these parks and sanctuaries, no management plans have been prepared and appropriate scientific management has not been introduced in any significant manner.

Apart from conserving wildlife, parks and sanctuaries, we can also fulfill an important role of educating the people and enlisting their support in wildlife conservation. These areas are a major tourist attraction and with proper interpretation and guidance, the visitors can be made to appreciate the rich natural wealth of our country and the importance of preserving it for posterity.

People living within or adjacent to parks and sanctuaries have been getting their requirements of fuelwood, timber, fodder, bamboo and other materials from the forests either free or on nominal payment. Their cattle had access to forest for grazing. Constitution of parks and sanctuaries has abruptly deprived the local people of

their traditional sources of basic requirements without providing alternative sources of supply. Villages have been shifted out. Cattle camps have been removed. All these have caused a great deal of hardship and resentment among the affected people.

There is urgent need to launch eco-development projects in these tense areas with the object of eliminating dependence on forest. This should include tree planting in village common lands and private holdings to provide fuelwood, small timber, fodder and organic manure. Improved 'chulahs' and non-conventional energy sources like biogas, solar heaters and cookers could be introduced to reduce fuelwood consumption. Steps must be taken to replace poor and unthrifty cattle with better breeds which would bring down the cattle population substantially and increase the yield of dairy products. This should be backed by necessary veterinary care.

There should be an integrated approach encompassing other development aspects such as education, sanitation, public health and improved agriculture and horticulture practices. People must realise that the forest is not only a provider but also a protector, giving stability to water supply, soil and food production.

Parks and Sanctuaries are areas for in - situ conservation of species. But in cases of highly endangered species, it may be necessary to take up ex - situ conservation measures by captive breeding. Outstanding success has been achieved in the case of all three species of crocodiles in India. Along the east coast of India, very good results have been achieved in captive hatching of sea turtles.

Zoological parks can play a useful role in captive breeding of endangered animals. Similarly for plants, botanical gardens and germ plasm banks can serve as centres for the conservation of rare species and varieties.

The danger of indiscriminate commercial exploitation to the survival of species has already been stressed in this paper. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which has been signed by most countries, including India, bans trade in endangered species and their products between the participating countries. India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 has adequate provision to control trade in wildlife and wildlife products but its enforcement is rather lax.

- K.A. BHOJA SHETTY

*Former Chief Conservator of
Forests, Tamil Nadu*

ARE THEY EXEMPT FROM SUSPICION ?



*“The World’s Most Dangerous Places” is the best seller compiled by Robert Pelton, Coskun Aral and Wink Dulles and hailed by the US Media. This book comprises of a chapter which talks about India, and how India is one of the most dangerous places in the World.

The chapter on India begins, “It is a ‘miracle’ that India even exists”.

“Being a nation of so many ethnicities and religions, it should have ripped itself into a bunch of dinky fiefdoms long ago, each with hundreds of years of history, separate religions, dialects and customs. Instead, over 900 million Indians and their government hobble painfully forward - burdened not only with poverty, hunger and sickness, but also with an alarming birthrate and

a potential nuclear conflict with Pakistan”.

History says India was one of the wealthiest countries in the world, with the wisest people, rich in culture and tradition. India is the only country in the world where there is a huge population of people living together with various linguistic and religious backgrounds. When such a diverse group of people are able to live in harmony with each other, the first world doesn’t approve.

The first world aims at creating disharmony among the third world countries and its local communities simply because it will be easier for its second invasion through ‘Globalisation’ and ‘Liberalization’. India and the third world should take up these issues seriously. Since the UNO no more functions as

Everytime a bomb goes off, the suspects include Indians, Pakistani agents, Kashmiri separatists, Sikh terrorists, Maoist rebels and Sri Lankan Tigers”. “Mother Teresa is the only one exempt from suspicion”.

it is supposed to, the people of the third world should rise and look at what is happening around them and ask for justice. Books which carry ‘dangerous’ information like this should be banned.

“Like a terminally ill patient”, it goes on, “India deals with the ugliest boils and rashes”. Its big problems, it sums up, are in the extreme South with the Tamil Tigers, and in the North with Sikh separatists. “The Hindu majority can’t get along with the Muslim minority.... The fallout has been felt as far away as in the Great Britain. Everytime a bomb goes off, the suspects include Indians, Pakistani agents, Kashmiri separatists, Sikh terrorists, Maoist rebels and Sri Lankan Tigers”. “Mother Teresa is the only one exempt from suspicion”.

Scrap literature of this kind in the market could prove 'dangerous' for the image of any country because the reader may not know the actual intention of the writer or the publisher.

Talking of diseases, boils and rashes, it is in the first world countries where there are new diseases detected day in and day out. Their diseases are mainly connected to overeating and abnormal sexual behaviour. To find medicines for their complications is becoming difficult. While research scientists are desperately trying to find new medicines for new diseases, one section of medical practitioners are talking of 'back to nature' and 'herbal medicines'. Herbs and greens which have medicinal value has been our food for centuries. Our holy scriptures and ancient writings have a mention about the value and usage of medicinal plants. It is a proved fact that Indian traditional medicines have more curative value than allopathic medicines. Now, 'back to nature' is a slogan, but, we've been living with it.

In India, people, especially children die of malnutrition and hunger, for which, we don't need medicines, but food which we do not have because of unequal distribution of food products. In the West, people

die of overeating and in the East, people die of hunger. This itself shows how much the first world has exploited its fellow beings.

Exploitation is nothing new to the first world. They have always done it in style. History narrates how traders turned rulers and had to be kicked out diplomatically. The characteristic feature of the Indian Independence struggle is 'Ahimsa' and that itself showed how a diverse group of people could join together and fight a common enemy with non-violence. We didn't need arms and ammunition to send the foreigners out, but only a strong will and unity. Now, the West calls us extremists and terrorists. The weapons which these extremists and terrorists use are made in first world countries. It is a deliberate effort by the first world to create disharmony among the third world countries.

The first world has manufactured enough of

defence arms. When a small third world country like ours is building its R 'n' D base in the field of nuclear technology, they want us to sign the CTBT.

The first world either supplies arms and ammunition to destroy a nation that gained its independence through non-violence, or it gives us a Mother Teresa whose work is condoned by them, since she represents the notion of the 'white man's burden' to heal the sick and suffering of the third world. It is natural that she is the only one 'exempt from suspicion'.

The first world is playing a dirty game and it's high time, we did something about it. The foreigners who invaded and left us, not only robbed us of our riches and our intellectual wealth, but also created misunderstanding among us and they still believe in doing so by writing and publishing various books and literature of the said kind.

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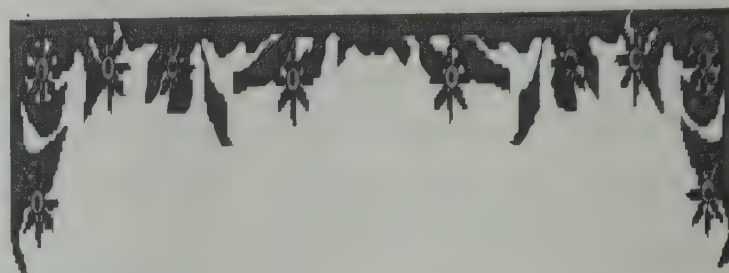
THE EDITOR
'DROPLET'

23, New Bamboo Bazaar Road
Bangalore - 560 001, INDIA

I DON'T KNOW SON....

Son : Daddy ?
 Dad : Yes, Son.
 Son : Is Pepsi the most popular drink ?
 Dad : That's right, Son.
 Son : Is it because, it is the healthiest ?
 Dad : Oh No... Not really...
 Son : Does it have any carbohydrates ?
 Dad : No Son.
 Son : Does it have any proteins ?
 Dad : No, it doesn't have, Son.
 Son : any vitamins ?
 Dad : I don't think it has any vitamins, Son.
 Son : Atleast fats... ?
 Dad : Hmmm. no fats even, Son.
 Son : Then what does it have, Daddy ?
 Dad : I believe some drug.
 Son : It is a drug ?
 Dad : Yes Son.
 Son : Does it benefit our economy ?
 Dad : You know, ... I really don't know.
 Son : ... and Daddy ?
 Dad : What is it, Son ?
 Son : S.K. Saigal is a great singer ?
 Dad : Yes, my son, one of the greatest singers of our land, the most respected one.
 Son : But in Pepsi advertisement, he is insulted...
 Dad : That is very unfortunate ...
 Son : But no one objected to it.
 Dad : No, no one.
 Son : They even favoured this drug which insulted one of our greatest ?
 Dad : It looks like it, Son.
 Son : Then, is something wrong with us, Dad? Are we drugged by this pepsi already?
 Dad : I... I... really don't know, Son.

- Santiago Iswara Prasad



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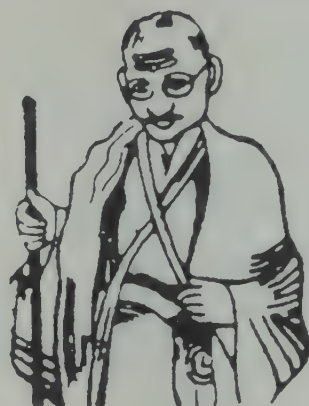
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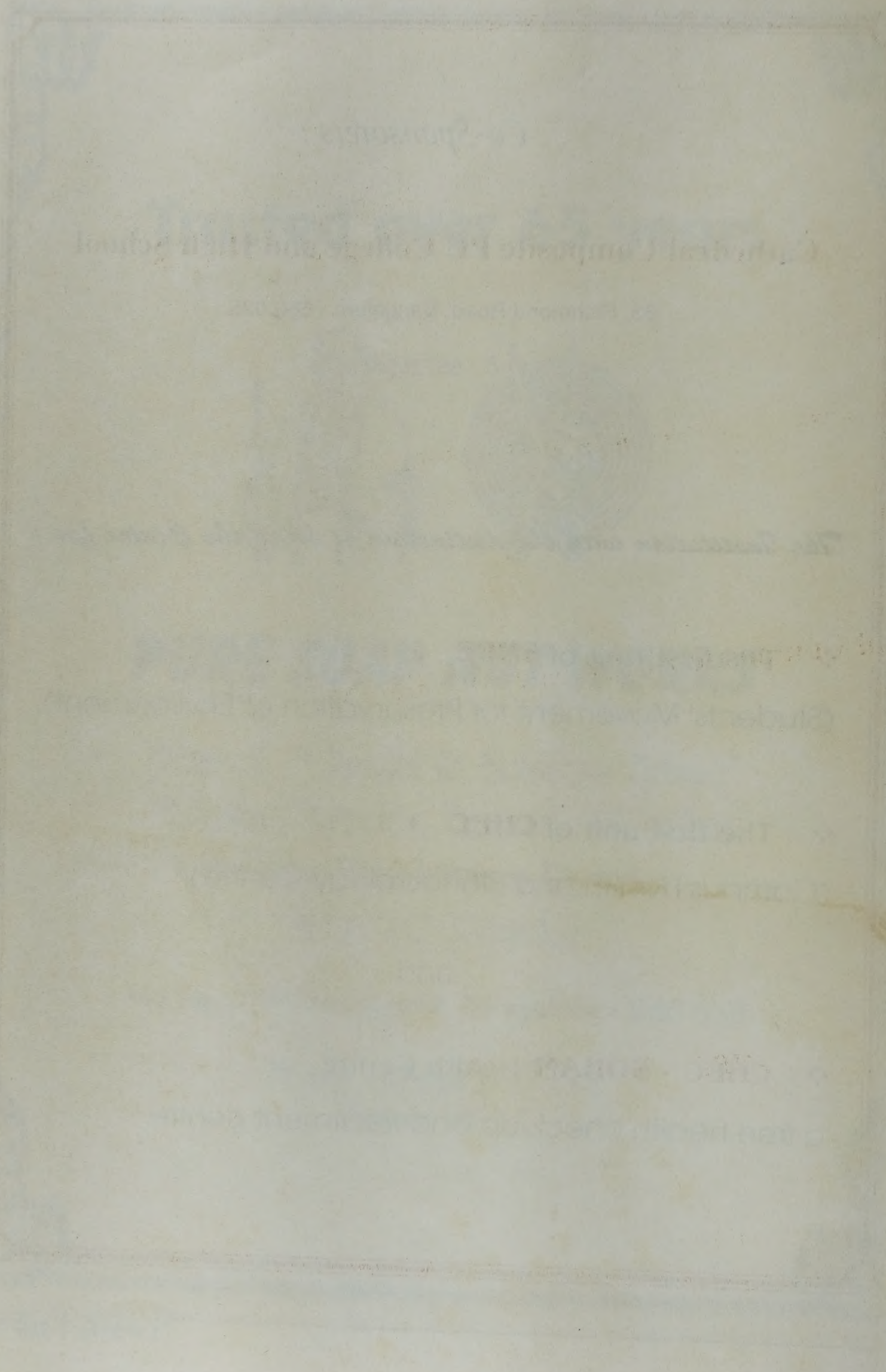
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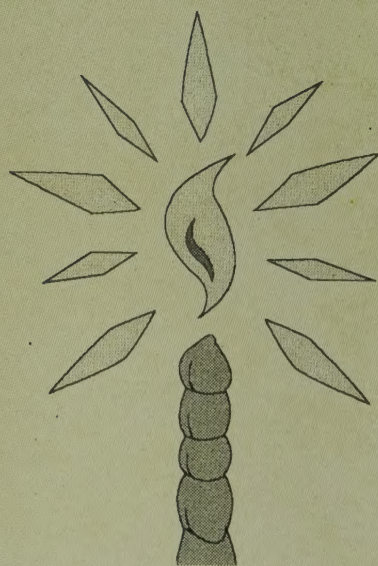
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